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'S WEST 125TH STREET OF NEW YORK CITY

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**THE
BURR-HAMILTON
DUEL**

COMPLIMENTS OF
HAMILTON BANK
78 WEST 125TH STREET OF NEW YORK CITY

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U. S. 4662, 28

AUG 21 1890

* Mr. M. Tower
N. Y. City

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THE DUEL between AARON BURR, third of the Vice-Presidents of the United States, and ALEXANDER HAMILTON, first Secretary of the Treasury, which took place at Weehawken, New Jersey, July 11th, 1804, is doubtless the most famous affair of its kind in the history of our country; and its unfortunate termination did more than everything else to abolish the practice of dueling in the North.

In the belief that a contemporaneous account of the event, and of some of the circumstances relating to it, will be of particular interest to residents in the northern part of New York City, where ALEXANDER HAMILTON's country house, "HAMILTON GRANGE," still stands; the following compilation is presented with the compliments of

HAMILTON BANK
OF NEW YORK CITY.

THE CORRESPONDENCE.

[*New York Herald*, July 16th, 1804.]

LETTER NO. 1.

[BURR TO HAMILTON.]

NEW YORK, June 18th, 1804.

Sir:—I send for your perusal a letter signed Charles D. Cooper,* which, though apparently published some time ago has but very recently come to my knowledge. Mr. Van Ness, who does me the favor to deliver this, will point out to you that clause of the letter to which I particularly request your attention.

You must perceive, sir, the necessity of a prompt and unqualified acknowledgment or denial of the use of any expression which would warrant the assertions of Dr. Cooper.

I have the honor to be,

Your obedient servant,

A. BURR.

GENERAL HAMILTON.

* See appendix.



LETTER No. 2.

[HAMILTON TO BURR.]

NEW YORK, June 20th, 1804.

Sir.—I have maturely reflected on the subject of your letter of the 18th inst., and the more I have reflected the more I have become convinced that I could not without manifest impropriety make the avowal or disavowal which you seem to think necessary. The clause pointed out by Mr. Van Ness is in these terms: "*I could detail to you a still more despicable opinion which Hamilton has expressed of Mr. Burr.*" To endeavor to discover the meaning of this declaration I was obliged to seek in the antecedent part of this letter for the opinion to which it referred as having been already disclosed. I found it in these words: "*General Hamilton and Judge Kent have declared in substance that they looked upon Mr. Burr to be a dangerous man and one who ought not to be trusted with the reins of government.*"

The language of Doctor Cooper plainly implies that he considered this opinion of



you, which he attributes to me, as a despicable one, but he affirms that I have expressed some other still more despicable, without however mentioning to whom, when or where. 'Tis evident that the phrase "*still more despicable*" admits of infinite shades from very light to very dark. How am I to judge of the degree intended or how shall I annex any precise idea to language so indefinite?

Between gentlemen, despicable and more despicable are not worth the pains of a distinction: when, therefore, you do not interrogate me as to the opinion which is specifically ascribed to me, I must conclude that you view it as within the limits to which the animadversions of political opponents upon each other may justifiably extend, and consequently as not warranting the idea of it which Doctor Cooper appears to entertain. If so, what precise inference could you draw as a guide for your conduct were I to acknowledge that I had expressed an opinion of you still more despicable than the one which is particularized? How could you be sure that even this opinion had exceeded the

bounds which you would yourself deem admissible between political opponents?

But I forbear further comment on the embarrassment, to which the requisition you have made naturally leads. The occasion forbids a more ample illustration, though nothing could be more easy than to pursue it.

Repeating that I cannot reconcile it with propriety to make the acknowledgment or denial you desire, I will add that I deem it inadmissible on principle to consent to be interrogated as to the justness of the inferences which may be drawn by others from whatever I may have said of a political opponent in the course of a fifteen years' competition. If there were no other objection to it this is sufficient, that it would tend to expose my sincerity and delicacy to injurious imputations from every person who may at any time have conceived the import of my expressions differently from what I may then have intended or may afterwards recollect. I stand ready to avow or disavow promptly and explicitly any precise or definite opinion which I may be charged with having declared

of any gentleman. More than this cannot fitly be expected from me; and especially it cannot be reasonably expected that I shall enter into an explanation upon a basis so vague as that which you have adopted. I trust on more reflection you will see the matter in the same light with me. If not, I can only regret the circumstance and must abide the consequences. (*a duel, perhaps?*)

The publication of Doctor Cooper was never seen by me till after the receipt of your letter.

I have the honor to be, etc.,

A. HAMILTON.

COL. BURR.

LETTER NO. 3.

[BURR TO HAMILTON.]

NEW YORK, 21st June, 1804.

Sir :—Your letter of the 20th inst. has been this day received. Having considered it attentively I regret to find in it nothing of that sincerity and delicacy which you profess to value.

Political opposition can never absolve gentlemen from the necessity of a rigid adherence to the laws of honor, and the rules of decorum. I neither claim such privilege nor indulge it in others.

The common sense of mankind affixes to the epithet adopted by Dr. Cooper, the idea of dishonor. It has been publicly applied to me under the sanction of your name. The question is not whether he has understood the meaning of the word, or has used it according to syntax, and with grammatical accuracy ; but whether you have authorized this application, either directly or by uttering expressions or opinions derogatory to my honor. The time "*when*" is in your own knowledge, but no way material to me, as the calumny has now first been disclosed, so as to become the subject of my notice, and as the effect is present and palpable.

Your letter has furnished me with new reasons for requiring a definite reply.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your obedient

A. BURR.

GENERAL HAMILTON.

On Saturday, the 22d of June, General Hamilton, for the first time, called on Mr. Pendleton, and communicated to him the preceding correspondence. He informed him [Pendleton] that in a conversation with Mr. Van Ness at the time of receiving the last letter he told Mr. Van Ness that he considered that letter as rude and offensive, and that it was not possible for him to give it any other answer than that Mr. Burr must take such steps as he might think proper. He said, farther, that Mr. Van Ness requested him to take time to deliberate, and then return an answer, when he might possibly entertain a different opinion, and that he would call on him to receive it. That his reply to Mr. Van Ness was, that he did not perceive it possible for him to give any other answer than that he had mentioned, unless Mr. Burr would take back his last letter and write one which would admit of a different reply. He then gave Mr. Pendleton the letter hereafter mentioned of the 22d of June, to be delivered to Mr. Van Ness when he should call on Mr. Pendleton for an answer, and went to his country house (Hamilton Grange).

The next day General Hamilton received, while there, the following letter :

LETTER No. 4.

[VAN NESS TO HAMILTON.]

June 23, 1804.

Sir.—In the afternoon of yesterday I reported to Col. Burr the result of my last interview with you, and appointed the evening to receive his further instructions. Some private engagements, however, prevented me from calling on him till this morning. On my return to the city I found upon enquiry, both at your office and house, that you had returned to your residence in the country. Lest an interview there might be less agreeable to you than elsewhere, I have taken the liberty of addressing you this note to enquire when and where it will be most convenient to you to receive a communication.

Your most obt. and very humble servt.,

W. P. VAN NESS.

GENERAL HAMILTON.

LETTER NO. 5.

[HAMILTON TO BURR.]

NEW YORK, June 22, 1804.

Sir:—Your first letter, in a style too peremptory, made a demand, in my opinion, unprecedented and unwarrantable. My answer, pointing out the embarrassment, gave you an opportunity to take a less exceptionable course. You have not chosen to do it, but by your last letter received this day, containing expressions indecorous and improper, you have increased the difficulties to explanation intrinsically incident to the nature of your application.

If by a “definite reply” you mean the direct avowal or disavowal required in your first letter, I have no other answer to give than that which has already been given. If you mean anything different, admitting of greater latitude, it is requisite you should explain.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

ALEX. HAMILTON.

AARON BURR, Esq.

This letter, although dated on the 22d June, remained in Mr. Pendleton's possession until the 25th, within which period he had several conversations with Mr. Van Ness. In these conversations Mr. Pendleton endeavored to illustrate and enforce the propriety of the ground General Hamilton had taken. Mr. Pendleton mentioned to Mr. Van Ness as the result, that if Col. Burr would write a letter, requesting to know in substance whether in the conversation to which Dr. Cooper alluded, any particular instance of dishonorable conduct was imputed to Col. Burr, or whether there was any impeachment of his private character, General Hamilton would declare to the best of his recollection what passed in that conversation ; and Mr. Pendleton read to Mr. Van Ness a paper containing the substance of what General Hamilton would say on that subject, which is as follows :

MEMORANDUM.

[PENDLETON TO VAN NESS.]

“ General Hamilton says he cannot imagine to what Dr. Cooper may have alluded unless it were to a conversation at Mr. Taylor's in Albany last winter (at which Mr. Taylor, he and General Hamilton were present.) General Hamilton cannot recollect distinctly the particulars of that conversation so as to

undertake to repeat them, without running the risk of varying, or omitting what might be deemed important circumstances. The expressions are entirely forgotten, and the specific ideas imperfectly remembered ; but to the best of his recollection it consisted of comments on the political principles and views of Col. Burr and the results that might be expected from them in the event of his election as Governor, without reference to any particular instance of past conduct, or to private character."

After the delivery of the letter of the 22d, as above mentioned, in another interview with Mr. Van Ness, he (Van Ness) desired Mr. Pendleton to give him in writing the substance of what he had proposed on the part of General Hamilton, which Mr. Pendleton did in the words following :

MEMORANDUM.

[PENDLETON TO VAN NESS.]

"In answer to a letter properly adapted to obtain from General Hamilton a declaration whether he had charged Col. Burr with any particular instance of dishonorable conduct, or had impeached his private character,

either in the conversation alluded to by Dr. Cooper, or in any other particular instance to be specified: he (Hamilton) would be able to answer consistently with his honor, and the truth, in substance, that the conversation to which Dr. Cooper alluded, turned wholly on political topics, and did not attribute to Colonel Burr any instance of dishonorable conduct, nor relate to his private character; and in relation to any other language or conversation of General Hamilton which Col. Burr will specify, a prompt and frank avowal or denial will be given."

On the 26th of June Mr. Pendleton received the following letter:

LETTER NO. 6.

[VAN NESS TO PENDLETON.]

Sir:—The letter which you yesterday delivered me (No. 5) and your subsequent communication, in Col. Burr's opinion, evince no disposition on the part of Gen. Hamilton to come to a satisfactory accommodation. The injury complained of and the

reparation expected, are so definitely expressed in Col. Burr's letter of the 21st instant that there is not perceived a necessity for further explanation on his part. The difficulty that would result from confining the enquiry to any particular times and occasions must be manifest. The denial of a specified conversation only, would leave strong implications that on other occasions improper language had been used. When and where injurious opinions and expressions have been uttered by General Hamilton must be best known to him, and of him only will Col. Burr enquire. No denial or declaration will be satisfactory, unless it be general ; so as wholly to exclude the idea that rumours derogatory to Col. Burr's honor have originated with General Hamilton, or have been fairly inferred from anything he has said. A definite reply to a requisition of this nature was demanded by Col. Burr's letter of the 21st instant. This being refused invites the alternative alluded to in Gen. Hamilton's letter of the 20th.

It was required by the position in which the

controversy was placed by General Hamilton on Friday last, and I was immediately furnished with a communication demanding a personal interview. The necessity of this measure has not, in the opinion of Col. Burr, been diminished by the General's last letter, or any communication which has since been received. I am, consequently, again instructed to deliver you a message, as soon as it may be convenient for you to receive it. I beg, therefore, you will be so good as to inform me at what hour I can have the pleasure of seeing you.

Your most obedient and

very humble servant,

W. P. VAN NESS.

NATHANIEL PENDLETON, Esq.

June 26th.

LETTER NO. 7.

[PENDLETON TO VAN NESS.]

26th June, 1804.

Sir :—I have communicated the letter which you did me the honor to write to of this date to Gen. Hamilton. The expe

tions now disclosed on the part of Col. Burr appear to him to have greatly extended the original ground of enquiry, and instead of presenting a particular and definite case for explanation seem to aim at nothing less than an inquisition into his most confidential conversations, as well as others, through the whole period of his acquaintance with Col. Burr.

While he was prepared to meet the particular case fairly and fully, he thinks it inadmissible that he should be expected to answer at large as to everything that he may possibly have said in relation to the character of Col. Burr at any time or upon any occasion. Though he is not conscious that any charges which are in circulation to the prejudice of Col. Burr have originated with him, except one which may have been so considered, and which has long since been fully explained between Col. Burr and himself, yet he cannot consent to be questioned generally as to any rumours which may be afloat derogatory to the character of Col. Burr without specification of the several rumours, many of them probably unknown to him. He does not,



however, mean to authorize any conclusion as to the real nature of his conduct in relation to Col. Burr, by his declining so long and vague a basis of explanation, and disavows an unwillingness to come to a satisfactory, provided it be an honorable accommodation. His objection is, the very indefinite ground, which Col. Burr has assumed, in which he is sorry to be able to discern nothing short of predetermined hostility. Presuming, therefore, that it will be adhered to, he has instructed me to receive the message which you have it in charge to deliver. For this purpose I shall be at home and at your command to-morrow morning from eight to ten o'clock.

I have the honor to be respectfully,
 your obedient servant
 NATHANIEL PENDLETON
 WILLIAM P. VAN NESS, Esq.

LETTER No. 8.

[VAN NESS TO PENDLETON.]

Sir:—The letter which I had the honor to receive from you, under date of yesterday,

states among other things that in General Hamilton's opinion Col. Burr has taken a very indefinite ground in which he evinces nothing short of predetermined hostility, and that General Hamilton thinks it inadmissible that the enquiry should extend to his confidential as well as other conversations. In this Col. Burr can only reply that secret whispers traducing his fame and impeaching his honor are, at least, equally injurious with slanders publicly uttered. That Gen. Hamilton had at no time and in no place a right to use any such injurious expressions; and that the partial negative he is disposed to give, with the reservations he wishes to make, are proofs that he has done the injury specified.

Col. Burr's request was in the first instance proposed in a form the most simple, in order that Gen. Hamilton might give to the affair that course to which he might be induced by his temper and his knowledge of the facts. Col. Burr trusted with confidence, that from the frankness of a soldier and the candour of a gentleman he might expect an ingenuous

declaration. That if, as he had reason to believe, Gen. Hamilton had used expressions derogatory to his honor, he would have had the magnanimity to retract them; and that if, from his language, injurious inferences had been improperly drawn, he would have perceived the propriety of correcting errors which might thus have been widely diffused. With these impressions Col. Burr was greatly surprised at receiving a letter which he considered as evasive, and which in manner he deemed not altogether decorous. In one expectation, however, he was not wholly deceived, for the close of Gen. Hamilton's letter contained an intimation that if Col. Burr should dislike his refusal to acknowledge or deny, he was ready to meet the consequences. This Col. Burr deemed a sort of defiance and would have felt justified in making it the basis of an immediate message. But as the communication contained something concerning the indefiniteness of the request, as he believed it rather the offspring of false pride than of reflection, and as he felt the utmost reluctance to proceed to extremities,

while any other hope remained, his request was repeated in terms more explicit. The replies and propositions on the part of Gen. Hamilton have in Col. Burr's opinion been constantly in substance the same.

Col. Burr disavows all motives of predetermined hostility, a charge by which he thinks insult added to injury. He feels as a gentleman should feel when his honor is impeached or assailed, and without sensations of hostility or wishes of revenge he is determined to vindicate that honor at such hazard as the nature of the case demands.

The length to which this correspondence has extended, only tending to prove that the satisfactory redress, earnestly desired cannot be obtained, he deems it useless to offer any proposition except the simple message which I shall now have the honor to deliver.

I have the honor to be, with great respect,

Your obedient and very humble
servant,

W. P. VAN NESS.

Wednesday Morning, June 27th, 1804.

With this letter a message was received by Mr. Pendleton, such as was to be expected, containing an invitation, which was accepted, and Mr. Pendleton informed Mr. Van Ness he should hear from him the next day as to further particulars.

This letter was delivered to Gen. Hamilton on the same evening, and a very short conversation ensued between him and Mr. Pendleton, who was to call on him early the next morning for a further conference. When he did so, Gen. Hamilton said he had not understood whether the message and answer was definitively concluded, or whether another meeting was to take place for that purpose between Mr. Pendleton and Mr. Van Ness. Under the latter impression, and as the last letter contained matter that naturally led to animadversion he gave Mr. Pendleton a paper of remarks in his own handwriting to be communicated to Mr. Van Ness if the state of the affair rendered it proper.

In the farther interview with Mr. Van Ness that day, after explaining the causes which had induced Gen. Hamilton to suppose that the state of the affair did not render it improper, he offered this paper to Mr. Van Ness, but he declined receiving it, alleging that he considered the correspondence as closed by the acceptance of the message that he had delivered.

Mr. Pendleton informed Mr. Van Ness of the inducements mentioned by Gen. Hamilton in those remarks for the postponing the meeting until the close of the Circuit, and as this was uncertain, Mr.

Pendleton was to let him know when it would be convenient.

On Friday the 6th of July, the Circuit being closed, Mr. Pendleton gave this information, and that Gen. Hamilton would be ready at any time after the Sunday following. On Monday the particulars were arranged, and the public are but too well acquainted with the sad results.

The paper above alluded to is as follows:

[REMARKS ON THE LETTER OF JUNE 27TH,
1804.]

“Whether the observations on this letter are designed merely to justify the result which is indicated in the close of the letter, or may be intended to give an opening for rendering any thing explicit which may have been deemed vague heretofore, can only be judged of by the sequel. At any rate it appears to me necessary not to be misunderstood. Mr. Pendleton is therefore authorized to say that in the course of the present discussion, written or verbal, there has been no intention to evade, defy or insult, but a sincere disposition to avoid extremities if it could be done with propriety. With this view Gen. Hamilton



has been ready to enter into a frank and free explanation on any and every object of a specific nature ; but not to answer a general and abstract inquiry, embracing a period too long for any accurate recollection, and exposing him to unpleasant criticisms from or unpleasant discussions with any and every person who may have understood him in an unfavorable sense. This (admitting that he could answer in a manner the most satisfactory to Col. Burr) he should deem inadmissible in principle and precedent, and humiliating in practice. To this, therefore, he can never submit. Frequent allusion has been made to slanders said to be in circulation. Whether they are openly or in whispers they have a form and shape, and might be specified.

“If the alternative alluded to in the close of the letter is definitively tendered, it must be accepted, the time, place and manner to be afterwards regulated. I should not think it right in the midst of a Circuit Court, to withdraw my services from those who may have confided important interests to me, and

expose them to the embarrassment of seeking other counsel, who may not have time to be sufficiently instructed in their cause. I shall also want a little time to make some arrangements respecting my own affairs."

THE DUEL.

[*New York Herald*, July 19th, 1804, copied from *Morning Chronicle*. July 17th, 1804.]

Col. Burr arrived first on the ground, as had been previously agreed. When General Hamilton arrived the parties exchanged salutations, and the seconds proceeded to make their arrangements. They measured the distance, ten full paces, and cast lots for the choice of position, as also to determine by whom the word should be given, both of which fell to the second of Gen. Hamilton. They then proceeded to load the pistols in each others presence, after which the parties took their stations. The gentleman who was to give the word then explained to the parties the rules which were to govern them in firing, which were as follows : "The parties being placed at their stations, the second who gives the word shall ask them whether they are ready ; being answered in the affirmative, he shall say '*present*'; after this the parties shall present and fire when they please. If one fires

•

before the other, the opposite second shall say '*one, two, three, fire,*' and he shall then fire or lose his fire." He then asked if they were prepared; being answered in the affirmative, he gave the word "present," as had been agreed on, and both parties presented and fired in succession; the intervening time is not expressed, as the seconds do not precisely agree on that point. The fire of Col. Burr took effect, and Gen. Hamilton almost instantly fell. Col. Burr then advanced towards General Hamilton, with a manner and gesture that appeared to General Hamilton's friend to be expressive of regret, but without speaking, turned about and withdrew, being urged from the field by his friend, as has been subsequently stated, with a view to prevent his being recognized by the surgeon and barge-men who were then approaching. No further communication took place between the principals, and the barge that carried Col. Burr immediately returned to the city. We conceive it proper to add that the conduct of the parties in this interview was perfectly proper as suited the occasion.

[*New York Herald*, July 13th, 1804.]

With emotions that we have not a hand to inscribe, have we to announce the death of **ALEXANDER HAMILTON**.

He was suddenly cut off in the forty-eighth year of his age, in the full vigor of his faculties and in the midst of all his usefulness.

* * * * *

[*New York Herald*, August 4th, 1804.]

The Coronor's Inquest, after a very patient and laborious examination of the facts and circumstances relating to the late afflicting event, have pronounced upon their oaths that "AARON BURR, ESQ., Vice-President of the United States, was guilty of the MURDER of ALEXANDER HAMILTON : and that William P. Van Ness, Esq., Attorney-at-Law, and Nathaniel Pendleton, Esq., Counsellor-at-Law, were accessories."

APPENDIX.

[*New York Herald*, July 23d, 1804.]

[LETTER OF CHAS. D. COOPER TO PHILIP SCHUYLER.]

Sir:—The malignant attack which my character has sustained in an anonymous hand-bill, to which your letter of the 21st inst. directed to the Chairman of the Federal Electioneering Committee of this city is annexed, and in which you contradict certain facts contained in a letter, said to have been written by me to Andrew Brown, Esq., of Bern, will be my apology for repelling the unfounded aspersions which have been thus dishonorably obtruded on the public.

Admitting the letter published to be an exact transcript of the one intended for Mr. Brown, I aver, that the assertions therein contained are substantially true, and that I can prove them by the most unquestionable testimony. I assert that *Gen. Hamilton and Judge Kent have declared, in substance, that they looked upon Mr. Burr to be a dangerous*



man, and one who ought not to be trusted with the reins of government. If, sir, you attended a meeting of Federalists, at the City Tavern, where Gen. Hamilton made a speech on the pending election, I might appeal to you for the truth of so much of this assertion as relates to him. * * * *

Oliver Phelps, when in this city, on his way to Canandaigua, stated, that Gen. Hamilton, and about one hundred Federalists in New York, would not vote for Mr. Burr. * *

I beg leave to remark, sir, that the anxiety you discovered, when his honor the chancellor was about to be nominated, induced me to believe, that you entertained a bad opinion of Mr. Burr, especially when taken in connection with General Hamilton's harangue at the City Tavern; and although I never suggested that you would act on the one side or the other in this election; yet, presuming on the correctness of your mind, and the reputation you sustain of an upright and exemplary character, I could not suppose that you would support a man whom I had reason to believe, you held in the lowest estimation.

It is sufficient for me, on this occasion, to substantiate what I have asserted. I have made it an invariable rule of my life to be circumspect in relating what I may have heard from others; and in this affair, I feel happy to think, that I have been unusually cautious—for really, sir, *I could detail you a still more despicable opinion which General Hamilton has expressed of Mr. Burr.*

* * * * *

I am, sir, with due respect,

Your humble servant,

CHARLES D. COOPER.

April 23, 1804.

[*New York Herald*, July 16th, 1804.]

The following paper in the handwriting of Gen. Hamilton was enclosed with his will and some other papers in a packet addressed to one of his executors, which was of course not to have been delivered but in case of the melancholy event that has happened. As it contains his motives and reflections on the causes that have led to this fatal catastrophe it is deemed proper to communicate it to the public.

"On my expected interview with Col. Burr, I think it proper to make some remarks explanatory of my conduct, motives and views.

"I was certainly desirous of avoiding this interview for the most cogent reasons.

"1. My religious and moral principles are strongly opposed to the practice of duelling, and it would ever give me pain to be obliged to shed the blood of a fellow creature in a private combat forbidden by the laws.

"2. My wife and children are extremely dear to me, and my life is of the utmost importance to them, in various views.

"3. I feel a sense of obligation towards my creditors, who in case of accident to me, by

the forced sale of my property, may be in some degree sufferers. I did not think myself at liberty as a man of probity lightly to expose them to this hazard.

"4. I am conscious of no ill-will to Col. Burr distinct from political opposition, which, as I trust, has proceeded from pure and upright motives.

"Lastly. I shall hazard much, and can possibly gain nothing by the issue of the interview.

"But it was, as I conceive, impossible for me to avoid it. There were intrinsick difficulties in the thing and artificial embarrassments from the manner of proceeding on the part of Col. Burr.

"Intrinsick, because it is not to be denied, that my animadversions on the political principles, character and views of Col. Burr have been extremely severe, and on different occasions, I, in common with many others, have made very unfavorable criticisms on particular instances of the private conduct of this gentleman.

"In proportion as these impressions were



entertained with sincerity and uttered with motives and for purposes which might appear to me commendable, would be the difficulty (until they could be removed by evidence of their being erroneous) of explanation or apology. The disavowal required of me by Col. Burr, in a general and indefinite form, was out of my power, if it had really been proper for me to submit to be so questioned; but I was sincerely of opinion that this could not be, and in this opinion I was confirmed by that of a very moderate and judicious friend whom I consulted. Besides that, Col. Burr appeared to me to assume, in the first instance, a tone unnecessarily peremptory and menacing, and in the second positively offensive. Yet I wished, as far as might be practicable, to leave the door open to accommodation. This, I think, will be inferred from the written communications made by me and by my direction, and would be confirmed by the conversations between Mr. Van Ness and myself which arose out of the subject.

“ I am not sure, whether, under all the cir-

cumstances, I did not go further in the attempt to accommodate, than punctilious delicacy will justify. If so, I hope the motives I have stated will excuse me.

“It is not my design, by what I have said to affix any odium on the conduct of Col. Burr, in this case. He doubtless has heard of animadversions of mine which bore very hard upon him ; and it is probable that as usual they were accompanied with some falsehoods. He may have supposed himself under a necessity of acting as he has done. I hope the grounds of his proceeding have been such as ought to satisfy his own conscience.

“I trust, at the same time, that the world will do me the justice to believe, that I have not censured him on light grounds, nor from unworthy inducements. I certainly have had strong reasons for what I may have said, though it is possible that in some particulars, I may have been influenced by misconstruction or misinformation. It is also my ardent wish that I may have been more mistaken than I think I have been, and that he, by his future conduct, may show himself worthy of



all confidence and esteem, and prove an ornament and blessing to the country."

"As well because it is possible that I may have injured Col. Burr, however convinced myself that my opinions and declarations have been well founded, as from my general principles and temper in relation to similar affairs, I have resolved if our interview is conducted in the usual manner, and it pleases God to give me the opportunity, to reserve and throw away my first fire, and I have thoughts even of reserving my second fire—and thus giving a double opportunity to Col. Burr to pause and to reflect.

"It is not, however, my intention to enter into any explanation on the ground. Apology, from principle I hope, rather than pride, is out of the question.

"To those who, with me, abhorring the practice of duelling may think that I ought on no account to have added to the number of bad examples, I answer that my relative situation, as well in public as private, enforcing all the considerations which constitute what men of the world denominate

honor, imposed on me (as I thought) a peculiar necessity not to decline the call. The ability to be in future useful, whether in resisting mischief or effecting good, in those crises of our public affairs, which seem likely to happen, would probably be inseparable from a conformity with public prejudice in this particular.

A. H.

[WILL OF ALEXANDER HAMILTON.]

[*New York Herald*, July 16th, 1804.]

In the name of GOD, Amen. I, ALEXANDER HAMILTON, of the City of New York, Counsellor-at-Law, do make this my Last Will and Testament, as follows :

First. I appoint John B. Church, Nicholas Fish and Nathaniel Pendleton of the city aforesaid, Esquires, to be Executors and Trustees of this my will, and I devise to them, their heirs and assigns, as joint tenants and not as tenants in common, all my estate real and personal whatsoever, and wheresoever, upon trust at their discretion, to sell

and dispose of the same, at such time and times, in such manner, and upon such terms as they the survivors and survivor shall think fit, and out of the proceeds to pay all the debts which I shall owe at the time of my decease; in whole, if the fund be sufficient, proportionably if it shall be insufficient, and the residue, if any there shall be, to pay and deliver to my excellent and dear wife Elizabeth Hamilton.

Though if it should please God to spare my life, I may look for a considerable surplus out of my present property, yet if He should speedily call me to the eternal world, a forced sale, as is usual, may possibly render it insufficient to satisfy my debt. I pray God that something may remain for the maintenance and education of my dear wife and children. But should it on the contrary happen that there is not enough for the payment of my debts, I entreat my dear children, if they, or any of them, should ever be able, to make up the deficiency. I without hesitation commit to their delicacy a wish which is dictated by my own. Though con-

scious that I have too far sacrificed the interests of my family to public avocations and on this account have the less claim to burthen my children, yet I trust in their magnanimity to appreciate as they ought this my request. In so unfavorable an event of things, the support of their dear mother, with the most respectful and tender attention, is a duty, all the sacredness of which they will feel. Probably her own patrimonial resources will preserve her from indigence. But in all situations they are charged to bear in mind that she has been to them the most devoted and best of mothers.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my hand the ninth day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and four.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

Signed, sealed, published and declared as and for his last will and testament, in our presence who have subscribed the same in

his presence, the words " John B. Church "
being above interlined.

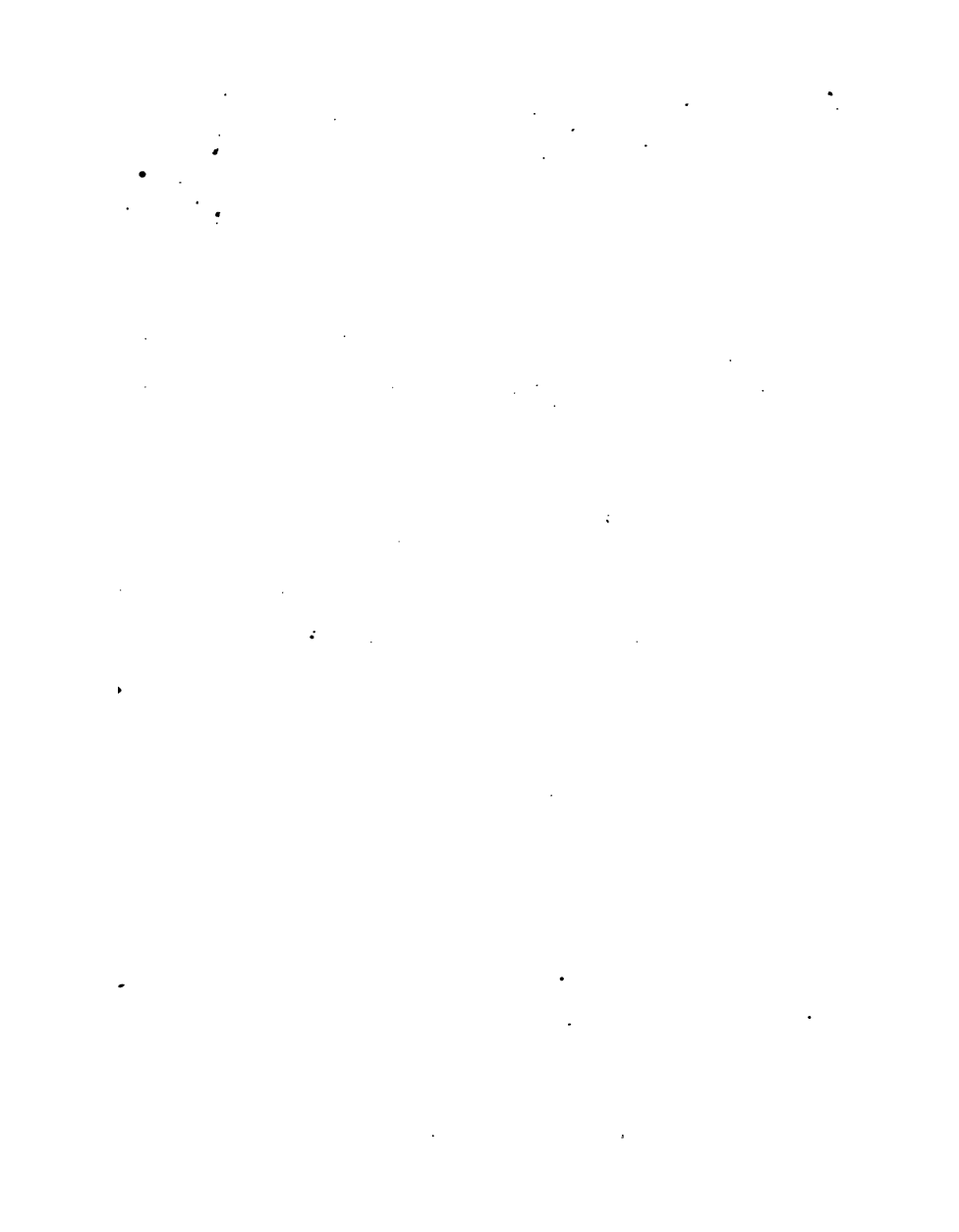
DOMINICK F. BLAKE,
GRAHAM NEWELL,
THEO. B. VALLEAU.

New York, Surrogate's Office, ss.
July 16th, 1804.

I do hereby certify the preceding to be a
true copy of the original Will of Alexander
Hamilton, deceased, now on file in my
office.

SILVANUS MILLER, Surrogate.

2



HAMILTON BANK

OF NEW YORK CITY.

278 WEST 125TH STREET.

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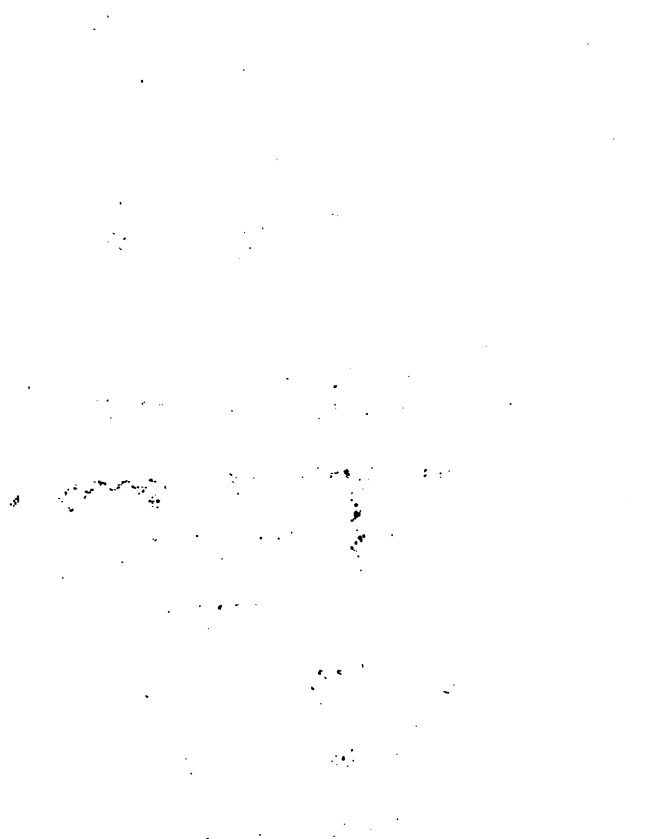
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